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D E B A T E

IN THE

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O F

*I R E L A N D.*

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DEBATE

HOUSE OF COMMONS





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# DEBATE

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OF

*I R E L A N D.*

ON WEDNESDAY, THE 15TH OF MAY, 1799.

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D U B L I N:

PRINTED, BY J. MOORE, 45 COLLEGE-GREEN.

1799.

DEBATE

HOUSE OF COMMONS



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## DEBATE, &c.

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WEDNESDAY—May 15.

A MESSAGE was brought from the Lords by two Masters in Chancery, returning six bills sent up by this House, agreed to by their Lordships without any amendment.—Ordered to the Lord Lieutenant to be certified into Great Britain.

Lord CASTLEREAGH moved, “ That the House do at its rising adjourn to the 1st of June.”—Ordered accordingly.

Lord CASTLEREAGH presented to the House a Message from his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, stating to the House, “ That his Excellency having taken into consideration the extraordinary high price of corn in this kingdom for some time past, considerably above that standard which the wisdom of Parliament had established as the criterion for opening the ports of the country for the admission of foreign corn, and seeing the apparent probability that the price of grain would rise considerably higher if measures were not adopted to prevent the distresses which would accrue from such a circumstance, his Excellency had given orders for the opening the ports of the country for the admission

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of foreign corn, and judged it necessary to communicate the same to the House of Commons."

The Message being read from the Chair, was ordered to be entered on the Journals; and upon the motion of Lord CASTLEREAGH, the House resolved forthwith into Committee to take the said Message into consideration.—His Lordship explained to the Committee, that if the average price of grain throughout the kingdom had been acted upon much sooner, it would have justified the measure now taken by his Excellency—a measure, however, which did not arise from the apprehension of any present scarcity of grain in the country, but rather as a measure of precaution to guard against the possibility of any scarcity which might arise at a future period, in consequence of the lateness of the present season.—His Lordship concluded by moving an address of thanks to his Excellency, which was agreed to, and being drawn up forthwith, was approved by the House, and ordered to be presented to his Excellency, by such Members of this House, as are of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council.

Mr. M. MASON having moved that the Speaker do issue his writ for the borough of Kilmallock, in the room of C. S. Oliver, Esq. who had accepted the Escheatorship of Munster,

Mr. DAWSON said, that he had no objection to the writ being issued, but at the same time would take occasion to ask the noble Lord on the Treasury Bench, why the Escheatorship of Munster had been given to the gentleman, in whose room the writ of Election was required, and refused to an honourable Friend of his, [Colonel Cole] who having been appointed to serve in  
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the island of Corfu, as a British officer, asked the noble Lord for that nominal place, the Escheatorship of Munster, in order that, as he could not discharge his duty to his Sovereign in that quarter of the globe, and fulfil the trust reposed in him by his constituents in this, he might give those constituents an opportunity of being represented in Parliament and their interest supported.—This the honourable Colonel asked, but what was the result? He was actually refused! Mr. Dawson said, he felt pained to relate such a circumstance in that House, but justice to his honourable Friend, and justice to the country, demanded of him to ask the Minister, why it was that he made such a use of the prerogative entrusted to the Crown, for the purpose of maintaining the freedom and privileges of Parliament; and to ask the noble Lord, why it was that his honourable Friend was singled out for such an exercise of that prerogative, while every day other Members of that House were suffered to vacate their seats? The fact was, and he called upon the noble Lord to deny it if he could, that the Escheatorship of Munster was, in this instance, refused, because the electors of Enniskillen had fixed on a relative of the honourable Colonel as his successor in that House, who would support the independence of his Country against the project of an Union—because it was intended that Colonel Cole's seat in the Irish Parliament should be filled by a gentleman [Mr. Balfour] who had already conspicuously manifested his respect and attachment to that Parliament and the liberties of his country, by the resolutions which he brought forward in the county of Louth in opposition to the measure of an Union; and because the noble Lord was afraid to see such a man within the walls of that House. In what he [Mr. D.] had said on this subject, he was authorized by his honourable friend, Colonel Cole, and was put in pos-



session by him of much more of the conversation that passed between him and the noble Lord, than he would then repeat; and he called upon the noble Lord, as a Minister acting upon fair and honest principles, to come forward and candidly avow what were his motives for acting by his Honourable Friend in a manner so apparently partial and unhandsome. It was an explanation which the noble Lord owed to himself, to that House, and to the Country, and which he [Mr. D.] hoped he would not decline giving.

PRIME SERJEANT said, that his right honourable Friend who sat beside him, would be very much wanting to the duty which he owed to his Sovereign, and to the situation in which he stood, if he were to enter into any explanation, or assign to any individual of that House the motives influencing him in the exercise of a prerogative of the Crown—to do so were in effect to resign that prerogative and betray the interests of his Sovereign, and therefore his advice to the noble Lord would be to maintain utter silence on the subject.

Mr. O'DONEL said, that the right honourable and learned Serjeant was a very careful guardian of the noble Lord, under whose banner he had enlisted, and had imposed a very prudent silence upon him, but as he had not the same power over his lungs, he would explain the reasons for this prudential silence. Much was said every day of the Austrian Generals, and the feats of the Archduke Charles were the theme of public conversation and applause, but they were nothing to those of *General Corruption*, who served under the noble Lord, in effecting the overthrow of the Constitution and Independence of Ireland, and it was because the honourable Colonel was an honest opponent of this

*General*



*General Corruption*, that he was refused the liberty of vacating his seat—it was because he supported the liberties of his Country against the profligate and wicked measure of an Union, that he was refused the Escheatorship of Munster, in the expectation that he must either stay at home and resign his regiment, or go abroad, and thereby give a vote more to the Minister on the next discussion of his favourite measure.

Mr. A. MOORE was proceeding to speak to the subject, when

Mr. ORMSBY spoke to order. He said that as a member had been announced to the House as having accepted an office of profit under the Crown, it was unconstitutional to debate the question before the House, inasmuch as it was unconstitutional the People should not be represented—for by the Place Bill, the seat was actually vacated from the moment of that acceptance, and he appealed to the Chair if in such case it was not mandatory to issue the writ?

The SPEAKER said, that as he had been called upon, he must declare, that it was not mandatory, for then there would be no necessity for putting a question on the subject—and he said the House had a right to debate any question before it.

Mr. ARTHUR MOORE.—Sir, I had little expectation that at this late period of the session, we should have again to vindicate the Constitution of the Country and the privileges of Parliament, against the encroachments of power and the wicked projects of corruption, nor is it possible to conceive how Ministers can justify such a partial and unfair exercise of the prerogative

gative of the Crown, unless they are determined openly and broadly to confess and declare (that which every day's events render it useless for them longer to conceal) that they are resolved to carry the measure of Union by any, and by every means, and to use all the engines and influence of power, and the insidious practices of fraud and unfair dealing, to bring about its completion. Sir, there is no man who is an attentive observer of public occurrences, and who keeps an eye on the measures of the Administration, who must not have seen, and seen with affliction, that the measures which have been taken, and are now in daily and unremitting practice, to effectuate the Union, are such as no honest man can justify, which, while they stamp the authors of them with indelible disgrace, must render the incorporation of the Legislatures of the two countries, if carried, impermanent, and the discontents and calamities of this nation eternal. Was it not, Sir, enough that the whole authority of the Court, both ordinary and *extraordinary*, was exerted to bring about the measure, and that upon a full and fair discussion of its merits, it was rejected by the unbought and uninfluenced sense of the Representatives of the People? Was it not enough that since that period the efforts of corruption have been redoubled—that promises are lavished, and stipulations made for offices and honours—that our liberties are brought to market-overt, where every dishonest man may sell and buy, but where no honest man is permitted to shew his face? Is it not enough that the public sense is daily misrepresented by fables and false reports of change of sentiment—of conversion from error—of majorities in favour of the measure in this House? Is it not enough that the sister kingdom and the British Cabinet, are evidently and designedly misled and misinformed, as to the real state of public opinion in this country? Is it not enough that  
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the public money is perverted to the purpose of extinguishing the free and fair communication of opinion, and of corrupting the Press, to become the vehicle of false statement, of personal calumny, and of libel of the Irish Parliament? Will not these means, these efforts, content them? Are they not satisfied with having the purse and the power of the country in their hands, and actively employed in forwarding their views? Are they not content with purchasing the mercenary aid of every hireling scribbler, and circulating gratis the wicked, seditious (nay, I think, in some instances little, if at all, short of) treasonable publications of interested or ignorant men, through the medium of the public Post-office, to all parts of the kingdom, while the communication of every publication in favour of the Legislative independence of Ireland, is not only withheld but forbidden? Are they not satisfied to sap and undermine our Constitution, by the slow and silent approaches of unremitting corruption, but must it be openly and boldly assailed by an undisguised aggression upon the privileges and independence of Parliament? Sir, in my mind the statement which has been made by my honourable Friend, ought to rouse the indignation of the House against those who have been the wicked advisers of so unjust and partial an exercise of a prerogative vested in the Crown, for the purpose of guarding the privileges, and securing the independence of the House of Commons. At any time, or under any circumstances, the transaction which has been stated to have taken place between the executive Government and the honourable and gallant Colonel, would have been highly disgraceful to the Administration, and an unpardonable invasion of the privileges of this House; but that such conduct should be pursued at a time when the greatest and most important subject that ever agitated



tated a free assembly, is still suspended over our heads, and is, we understand, again to be brought forward, that the *practice* of Ministers here should be so different from the *professions* of Mr. Pitt, who in his speech on the Union, assures Great Britain, and Ireland, and Europe, that the measure is not to be resumed, unless called for by the free, uninfluenced, unequivocal sense and opinion of the Parliament and People of Ireland; that the People of both nations should be told from authority that *fair means* only are to be used, when every *foul means* are practised; that this House should be mocked and insulted from day to day with the insincere assurance that all that is sought for on the subject, is the unbiassed sense of Parliament, at the same time that before a member is allowed to vacate his seat, he must condition that his successor will support the Union, is such a transcendant violation of Parliamentary freedom, as this House ought not only to resent, but to punish. Sir, if this office of Escheatorship is to be disposed of by the Crown exclusively to those who will previously condition to support the measures of the Ministry, the Place Bill, instead of being a means of securing the independence of Parliament, becomes at once a formidable instrument of Ministerial influence and corruption, and instead of being a barrier of defence against the undue exercise of the prerogative, it legitimates its abuse, and forwards and facilitates its encroachments. Surely a bill which was sought for by the most popular character in this country for years—which for so many sessions in former Parliaments was successfully resisted by the Court, and perseveringly demanded by the Country; but which was at length conceded as a sacrifice on the one side, and received as an acquisition on the other, surely this popular statute will not now be said to authorize the evil it was enacted to remedy, namely, the grievous  
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and enormous influence of the Ministers of the Crown, over the Representatives of the People in Parliament. Sir, I believe there is no honourable Gentleman in this House, disposed to question the undoubted prerogative of the Crown to bestow its favours on those whom the Administration shall think fit to recommend; but the Escheatorships of the provinces are now become mere nominal offices—They are offices now, by practice and opinion, exclusively applicable to the purpose of occasional vacation of the seats of this House, in order either to accommodate any member who might wish to retire from Parliament altogether, or be eligible for another seat, or to gratify the electors of any particular place, by giving them an opportunity of electing whatever person they should think most worthy of the trust of representing them. This is the use made of the nominal offices in England, viz. the Stewardship of the Three Chiltern Hundreds, and of the Manor of East Hundred, and which Mr. Hatsell states have been, since the year 1750, made use of *for the convenience of all parties*, and which the Ministers of England have uniformly and impartially so applied for the purpose of accommodation, where the seat has not been vacated for any pecuniary consideration. But, Sir, the facts stated by my honourable Friend, not only shew that in the present instance the rule of impartial accommodation has been departed from, but a most venal, unconstitutional, and illegal use made of the office—and yet the noble Lord will not condescend to give the House of Commons any exculpatory explanation of the conduct of Administration, or even to say a word in mitigation of the serious charge brought against himself. If the respectability of my honourable Friend who has mentioned the subject, is to be only noticed by a supercilious indifference and a fastidious silence—if the anxiety of the House for the inviolability of its privileges, is



not sufficient to induce the noble Lord to avow or disavow the transaction, surely a sense of what is due to the character of the great Minister who employs him, or (what ought to touch him more sensibly) of what is due to himself, render it incumbent on him either to refute the accusation, or to acknowledge the offence. But the learned Gentleman who fills so ably and honourably the first office in his profession (Prime Serjeant) has enjoined a perfect silence on the noble Lord, as to this subject, and he very sagely, and perhaps very prudently, tells us that for the noble Lord to say any thing, would be to betray the interests of the Crown; and an honourable Gentleman on the same side has said, with equal discretion, that it is impossible to add a word to what has been so ably said by Mr. Prime Serjeant, and indeed I must entirely agree with him, that it is impossible to say any thing on the subject, but what the learned Gentleman has said—that is, it is impossible to say any thing for the noble Lord, but to impose the injunction of silence upon his lips. It is, I agree with the honourable Gentleman, one of those topics which admits of nothing being said upon it, because it contains a charge which cannot be justified, and therefore it was that the learned Gentleman not only imposed the rule of silence, but very nearly set the example; however, Sir, in my conception, in the very few words which the learned Gentlemen has uttered, he has given a very unconstitutional opinion—he resorts to the prerogative of the Crown, to shelter the Minister from a charge of having violated the privileges of Parliament. Does he call it an exercise of the prerogative, to make corrupt bargains with the members of the Legislature, to make the representation of the people an article of traffic, and to impose terms and conditions upon individuals previous to their taking their seats in this House? is it a prerogative of the Crown



to violate the independence of Parliament? is it the interest of the Crown that the conduct of wicked Ministers should neither be investigated or punished, or is it the right of the Crown to withhold from this House those facts and that evidence which might convict and condemn the guilty violator of its most sacred privileges? the question here is not about the exercise of the prerogative; but, whether an individual Minister has abused the prerogative for the purpose of subverting—first, *the freedom*, and then *the existence* of Parliament; and in this transaction I consider the interests of the Crown and of this House to be equally betrayed, because they are equally interested in preserving the integrity and inviolability of the Constitution. Shall it then be said that because the Crown has the prerogative of bestowing offices, that therefore the Minister shall with impunity make use of the power of one branch of the Constitution to subvert the independence of another, and to destroy the poise and balance of the whole? Sir, the motion before the House, though simply a motion to issue a writ for a vacant seat, involves in it every thing of importance to the dignity, the privileges, and the existence of this Parliament. If we sanction the undue and prostituted use which has been made use of the offices for vacating seats in this House, we in effect give up our Legislature and betray our Country. The only question for us is to ascertain, has the transaction stated taken place? for if it has, its wickedness and illegality can be disputed by no man, it is charged upon the administration, and it is not denied. I believe no man would consider it either an injurious or dishonourable disclosure of the secrets of Government to deny such a serious charge, if the noble Lord could; but if it be not denied, can the House do any thing else than believe it to be true, and if it be true, and that this House will not repro-

bate and punish it, it will be better submit at once to the vassalage and servility prepared for us, it will be better to *yield* the Constitution with a good grace than *to have it taken from us by fraud, foul-dealing, and indirect means*, it will be better to embrace with courage the instant death of an Union, than to enjoy for a time a precarious and painful existence, with the melancholy certainty before our eyes of closing our career in ultimate and inevitable dissolution.

Mr. PLUNKETT.—Sir, I did hope that the question put with so much candour and moderation by my hon. Friend, would have received an answer. I did hope that a question of such import to the country, and to the noble Lord to whom it was addressed, would not have been treated with contemptuous silence. I did hope, Sir, that the noble Lord would have felt his character, and that of his administration too deeply involved in the answer to that question, to have suffered him to persist in contemptuous silence. But Sir, as I see that the noble Lord is subdued by the irresistible eloquence of the honorable and learned Gentleman who sits beside him, and that he feels himself compelled to yield to his all-powerful injunction; I feel myself warranted in supposing, that any answer which could have been given to the question, would have confirmed in its fullest extent the charge which was conveyed in it; and, Sir, under such circumstances I can no longer remain silent. I am not fond of obtruding myself upon the attention of the House; during a great part of the session, I have remained a silent spectator of measures which I strongly disapproved; feeling that I could not prevent or mend them, I was satisfied to look on; but Sir, it is not in human nature to remain a passive observer of conduct such as this. What stuff does the noble Lord suppose  
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this House or this Country to be made of, does he consider it so abject and so careless, that even the form and semblance of common decency should be disregarded? The noble Lord at this moment exhibits a phenomenon unexampled in the history of any free country, after being baffled and disgraced in a vital measure, he continues to brave the parliament and the people, and to tell them that that measure shall be carried, no matter by what means. I am told Sir, that this question has no connection with the Union; I deny it, no two questions can be more essentially involved, because the noble Lord by his silence on this night avows, that he means by a barefaced exertion of prerogative, to enforce this reprobated measure against the fair sense of Parliament and people, and therefore, though I will not tire the House by trying the merits of a question which has been already so amply discussed and so explicitly reprobated, I will beg to call the attention of the House to the conduct of the noble Lord and of the Government in the prosecution of it. This measure, Sir, was brought forward with but little interval indeed being allowed for the public to examine it before its introduction to this House, in that little interval however public scorn and indignation had attached upon it. But still it was brought into this House accompanied by the execrations of the people of Ireland, but at the same time with the proud boast, and I do believe with the childish hope, on the part of the noble Lord, that it would be carried by a triumphant majority; of its fate I need not remind you; it was flung out of parliament with abhorrence. How Sir was the majority formed by whom it was rejected?—was any man bribed to resist the Union? was any man promised to resist the Union? was any man dismissed from office, or threatened with dismissal to make him resist the Union?

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was there any mean motive, or selfish interest, or sordid affection of the human heart, pressed into the service to resist the Union? no Sir, it was dismissed and defeated by the instinct, and the reason, and the virtue, and the talents, and the property of the country. What was the consequence? have the honourable men who were dismissed from office been restored? and has the absurd projector who failed in his rash experiment been dismissed? no Sir, but the men who were turned out of office, because they gave a wise and honest opinion, which has been confirmed by parliament, and by the nation, are kept out of office, merely because they gave that opinion, and the Minister who brought forward this weak and wicked measure, after being disgraced and baffled retains his place. I therefore repeat it, the noble Lord exhibits a political phenomenon unparalleled in the history of any free country. In former times, when the Minister has found the sense of the Legislature and the country against him, his measures have been abandoned, and he himself has sought safety in retirement. But here the Minister retains his place, and braves the Legislature, and braves the Country, and avows his perseverance in the measure which they have trampled on, and avows his determination to carry that measure by means the most unconstitutional and shameless. But Sir, it seems we were a faction who rejected it. I would be glad to know, was any man amongst us actuated by a motive of self-interest? [Mr. Martin said yes,] I should be glad the honourable Member would point out the instance and the motive. I should be glad to hear the solitary instance amongst that majority, of a man swayed by any other interest than that which is common to every Irishman—the interest which he feels and shares with the Country itself. But Sir, if we are to look for motives, let me ask, where

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was the unbought and uninfluenced sense of parliament that supported the measure? I have heard much from the friends of Union, of the corruption of parliament; on which side has that corruption been arrayed on the present question? I have heard of 116 placemen in this House. Let ~~us~~ ask if you except the men who fill those places and the men who have been promised them, if you except the possession and the reversion of that patronage, if you except the men who have been promised promotion and rank for their services, who are the men in this House who have supported an Union? I do not say, Sir, that some honest men may not have supported the measure. I believe that there are some men panic-struck and who would resort to any measure which they fancied would free them from their present apprehensions, without considering whether the measure proposed is really fitted to give them security; and therefore it is that I hail with peculiar pleasure the success of his Majesty's allies on the Continent, because I am confident that if peace were restored, and the danger of French invasion and French intrigue removed, there would not be one honest voice in the kingdom to be raised in favour of this ill-fated project. Let it not then be said that the Union has been defeated by a faction. I will tell the noble Lord who are the faction that have defeated it; they are the faction who have put down the rebellion in Ireland before Great Britain gave her any assistance. They are the faction by whom even within the young memory of that young minister, the connexion between the two countries has been preserved. They are the faction to whom it is owing that at this moment a vestige of the British Government is to be traced existing in this country. They are the faction without whom you would have lost Ireland in the last year, and without



out whom you could not hold it during the next. I therefore caution the noble Lord not to indulge himself or his adherents in the cant of branding such men with the name of faction, and not to persist in measures to which such men have declared their rooted antipathy. But Sir, we are told that the free and unbiassed sense of Parliament, and of the country must be obtained, and when that shall be done the measure will again be brought forward; does the noble Lord really expect that credit will be given to those professions? does he believe us to be such dolts and drivellers that we will judge his conduct by those assertions, whilst his acts in contradiction of them are staring us in the face? does the noble Lord wish to have the unbiassed sense of Parliament, and does he at the same time refuse permission to the honourable Colonel to vacate his seat, avowedly because he knows his successor would be hostile to an Union? At first the noble Lord professed that no man should be allowed to vacate, unless he gave satisfactory assurance that his seat was not to be sold. I state it as a fact, and desire to be contradicted if it is not so, that the noble Lord has totally abandoned that principle, which I admit was a fair and honourable one. I state it as a fact that since he made that profession he has allowed seats to be vacated, where he knew that money was to be given by the successor, and that he has refused permission to vacate, as in the instance of the honourable Colonel, where he knew that no money was to be given. I state it as a fact that it is publicly avowed by Government that voting or not voting for the Union, is the sole rule by which the permission to vacate shall be regulated. Will any man after this be so senseless as to believe that Government wished for the fair sense of the Parliament or of the People; do they wish for the fair sense of the People?

ple? will they deny that they have purchased the newpapers to admit publications only on one side? will they deny that they have instructed Sheriffs to prevent the sense of the counties being collected by the convening of county meetings? are they ready now to have the counties of Ireland convened and to abide the test of their declarations on the question? We know, Sir, that the power of Government has been strained in every corner of the kingdom, to prevent the sense of the people being declared. I am informed that their emissaries actually descended so low as to threaten a publican in the city of Cork, that his licence should be withdrawn if he ventured to receive into his house a number of gentlemen, who afterwards affixed their signatures to an address, thanking the Parliament for having rejected the Union. Sir, whilst such a system is pursued, it is impossible to believe the Government of the country when they tell us that they wish for the real sense of the country. It is an easy matter to call us to give a candid discussion to the subject. They may tell us distinctly (that I think is the fashionable phrase) that the measure is not to be pressed against the sense of Parliament and People. They may clasp their hands and implore us not to prevent a fair enquiry, and they may set this verbage to any tune they please, but whilst their conduct shews that they are straining every nerve to corrupt the sense of Parliament, and to stifle the voice of the People, they cannot hope to be believed. I do therefore caution the noble Lord against persevering in such a hopeless and exasperating system; his measure he never can accomplish, but the attempt may prove fatal both to the Government and to the Country.

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The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, that he never felt more surprised than at seeing the House involved in such a conversation. The question before it was, whether a Member having vacated his seat, by accepting a place of profit under the Crown, a new writ of election should be issued, pursuant to the usage of the House, and the spirit of the Constitution. That a person accepting an office from the Crown vacates his seat thereby, was a fact unquestionable, and it followed of necessity that a new writ must be issued.—nay it was mandatory on the House to issue it.—Whatever may have been said about the votes and opinions of Members on his side of the House, who held offices under the Crown, he conceived himself to be as independent in principle and conduct as any Member in that House, and acting in the spirit of that independence he would, in the face of that House and the hearing of every man in it, advise the noble Lord who sat beside him to maintain that silence, which in the present instance it was so peculiarly his duty to do—and he would tell the noble Lord that he would act most contemptibly, and betray the trust reposed in him by his Sovereign, if he descended to any explanation to the interrogatories and cross-questions put to him by individuals of that House—and he would further tell him, that if he were so pitiful as to render to any man in that House explanation which was only due to his Majesty, he would beg of him to get an Attorney General from the other side of the House.—But what was all this clamour raised about? Because the noble Lord, as was his duty, refused an office, which would have gone to deprive the constituent of those Parliamentary services which he had a right to receive from the representative. [A loud laugh from the other side of the House.] —Mr. Attorney General, in continuation, said, that he

he would not be put down by an ignorant laugh—he would shew it was an ignorant laugh—for as soon as the electors make choice of a representative, and that he accepts that representation, they have a vested right in his services—Yes! he contended that it was the fact, and the law. The subject of an Union was still so fresh in the memory of gentlemen at the other side of the House, that they could not think or speak of any thing else, and, like Alexander, pluming themselves on the victory which they obtained,

“ They fight their battles o’er again,  
“ And thrice they slay the slain.”

He had known of a Presbyterian faction having once endeavoured to appoint a Committee for the purpose of disposing of all public offices, and taking the controul over them entirely out of the hands of the Crown: If a Minister were, as in the present instance, to be bullied by every individual of Parliament, and brought to account for his use of that branch of the prerogative, he conceived it would be better to have the Presbyterian committee at once. Indeed it was the opinion of the sage and erudite Mrs. M’Cawley, that such an arrangement were most desirable, and it might be the opinion of all those who wished to leave to the Crown nothing but the name and shadow of authority—but as he had the misfortune to differ from Mrs. M’Cawley, he would recommend to the Minister to keep the disposal of offices to himself, and not to betray that part of the prerogative of the Crown, by answering the interrogatories of any Member of that House.

Mr. J. C. BERESFORD said, that he could not desire a better argument for opposing the issue of the writ, than that with which the right honourable and learned



Member had furnished him, for if the granting the Escheatorship of Munster was nothing more than a trick by which the Representative was enabled to cheat the Constituent, he would in such case think it good grounds for refusing it in all instances. But in the case of his honourable Friend (Colonel Cole) how would it appear to the people of this country, when they find a member faithful to their interests, ordered by his Majesty on foreign service, and then refused a nominal office, which would enable him to vacate his seat, and his constituents to choose another representative?

[Here Mr. B. was called to order by Mr. F. Hutchinson, who said, that he had got out of the question before the House.]

Mr. Beresford proceeded to state the ill effect it would have on the public mind, when they see members of that House, who were adverse to the measure of an Union, and who happened to hold rank in the British army, sent out of the country in order to thin the House, and give a majority to Government—and when it would be seen that the Place-Bill was made a tool of in the hands of Government, to enslave Parliament, instead of maintaining it free.

Hon. F. HUTCHINSON said, the question before the House was, whether a new writ should issue for the borough of Kilmallock, in the room of Mr. Oliver, who had accepted an office of profit under the Crown? the seat being, by the provisions of the Place-Bill, thus become vacant, the law was mandatory, and the writ must issue. No difference of opinion could arise upon it; but Gentlemen had thought proper in speaking to this subject, to introduce the question of the Union: he had

had called his honourable Friend (Mr. J. C. B.) to order, when he was enlarging on this topic, for the purpose of recalling his attention to the question under debate, and not from an apprehension that his honourable Friend could succeed in his endeavour to inflame the People. The season for that delusion was now past—the discussions which had taken place in both countries had informed the public judgment, and it was too late now to practise any delusion upon it with effect. He said, that to the best of his observation there was a strong growing sentiment in favour of the Union in many parts of the kingdom. He spoke more particularly of the South, where his connexions lay; he said he believed it to be true, that fifteen parts out of sixteen of the property of the county Cork had, by public resolutions, declared their opinions in favour of this measure; that the sentiment of a most numerous and respectable meeting held in Cork had been long since known; that he had taken pains to inform himself of the opinion of the county Kerry, and that he had the best grounded reasons to think that nearly the whole weight of the property of that county was favourable to the Union. He said, he referred to those parts of the kingdom only with which he happened to be particularly connected; that from these and similar facts, which other Gentlemen might state from their local knowledge, he desired permission to controvert the assertion so often repeated, that the sense of the majority of the nation was adverse to the Union. He said he could not help observing, that this assertion contained in itself a monstrous assumption, when it was a fact which could not be controverted, that the Catholics, who composed that majority, had, as a body, cautiously refrained from delivering any public opinion upon the question. Having mentioned the Catholic body, he stated, among other grounds



grounds of argument, that he sustained the Union, principally because it was his firm persuasion that it would have the effect of restoring to the Catholics their just rights, and would place them in a situation of perfect equality with their Protestant fellow-subjects; that in speaking, of Ireland, it ought always to be remembered, that no nation has ever been in this respect similarly circumstanced. He said it was time to apply a remedy to the evils arising from this exclusion, and that conceiving the Union to be that remedy, he would sustain it whensoever brought before Parliament, considering it as a measure calculated, among other wise purposes, to heal the dissensions of this country, and to strengthen and cement the force of the empire.—He begged leave, before he sat down, to advert to some observations which had been made on the conduct of Sheriffs. He had the honour of standing in that situation for the county Tipperary—He had been applied to, to call a meeting of certain baronies, and afterwards had received a requisition to convene the county, to consider of the question of a Legislative Union: he had declined to comply with either of these requisitions; but in so doing, he acted in compliance with the opinion and advice of the majority of the rank and property of that great county, whose sentiments he had thought it his duty to consult, and by whose sentiments he had been directed. They conceived, from the disturbed state of the country, among other reasons, that the time for this meeting was inopportune; they had stated this opinion to him in a public paper, conceived in the strongest terms.—His opinion coincided with theirs, and he had acted accordingly.

Right

Right Hon. W. B. PONSONBY, in answer to Mr. Attorney General, denied that the acceptance of the Escheatorship of Munster made it mandatory in the House to issue a new writ of election, for the House had at all times the complete Government of its own privileges. He also denied that the sentiment of the county of Cork was favourable to an Union, and asserted on the contrary, that the great majority of property was against it, that property he described to be the greatest and most respectable in the county, without being enchained by honours or emoluments to the will of Government. If, as was so vauntingly stated, there was that "growing sentiment" in favour of an Union—if, as was asserted by the Minister and his friends in that House, and by the literary instruments of Union disseminated through the country, that the people of Ireland were friendly to the measure of an Union, why then were the people prevented from expressing their opinions on the subject? No danger could result to the views of Government from such expression, and would be infinitely stronger proofs of their wishes, and accelerate the measure of Union much more than the little paltry addresses and advertisements, which were obtained by such meanness of artifice and solicitation. As to what had been said of the Catholics avoiding to express their opinions on the subject, it was easily accounted for in the general restraint laid upon opinion that was not favourable to the Union, and had they even been fully at liberty to declare themselves, that they had not done so was proof strong and unequivocal enough that they disliked the measure; nor could they, having a regard for their country and for their own interests, do other than dislike it, for they have too much good sense not to know that an Union would for ever extinguish their political hopes. With respect to the question immediately before  
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the House, the electors of Kilmallock had a right to be represented, so had those of Enniskillen; but the one ought not to be excluded from the benefits held out to the other, and he trusted that the noble Lord would not be so wanting in respect to the House and to himself, as to persevere in the silence which his friends had imposed on him.

Mr. ALEXANDER said, that in the debate which had been provoked from the other side of the House, he saw nothing but that kind of frantic and expiring effort of men who, conscious that the opinion of the country was going against them, wished to inflame the public mind against a measure which they felt they could not prevent, and in revenge for disappointed ambition to excite a rebellious feeling in the country.—He contended that the general opinion was in favour of an Union, and instanced the Grand Juries of the counties of Tyrone, Down, and others. He concluded by supporting the issue of the writ.

Mr. STEWART (Killymoon) would not have arisen, he said, but for an observation which had fallen from an honourable member, relative to the county Tyrone—[Mr. Alexander whispered across the table, that he had said the Grand Jury]—Why, Sir, (said Mr. S.) the Grand Jury did not express itself on the subject of an Union, and if it had, I have no doubt but it would have been in language correspondent with that of the county, which declared itself so decidedly adverse to the project of an Union.—Mr. S. continued, that it was not his intention to have risen to the subject of debate, but as he was up, he expressed a hope that the noble Lord would declare that he intended to make no improper use of that prerogative which had been vested in the

the Crown for the purpose of maintaining the freedom and independence of Parliament.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the question before the House was simply whether a writ of election should issue for the borough of Kilmallock, but another question foreign to that had been introduced, and questions put to the noble Lord which it were culpable in him to reply to. The honourable and learned Member who had just sat down, was too conversant with the duties of ministerial situation, not to know and feel that the noble Lord would desert his duty if he entered into explanation on the exercise of the prerogative: but the fact was that the present debate was struck up as a finale to the session, and to arouse the public discontents on a question which had gone to sleep, and that gentlemen were afraid of that change in the public opinion which was too evident for them to overlook—he would say no more than to advise his right honourable friend to decline answering any interrogatory, and to say that he would vote for the question before the House.

Mr. HARDY supported the motion. He entered into a short history of the origin of the Place Bill, and mentioned that at a meeting of those who originally framed it, there was a difference of opinion as to the adoption of those nominal offices which had given rise to the present motion.—Several Gentlemen wished that no office like the Escheatorship of Munster should exist—foreseeing (what indeed had now happened) that in this country it would be grossly abused, but that his late respectable and much lamented friend, Mr. Forbes, who was the parent of the Bill, thought otherwise, judging from the practice of England, where a similar office, the Chiltern Hundreds, had existed, merely for



the accommodation of Members who wished to retire from the House of Commons, and had in almost every instance been given with impartiality by every Minister to gentlemen at one side of the House as well as the other. But could Mr. Forbes now rise from his grave, what would his indignation be, to see not only his friends' predictions too fatally fulfilled—but the very Bill, whose object was the independency of the House of Commons, now converted, shamefully and scandalously, into a deadly instrument, not only for the destruction of the House of Commons, but the annihilation of even the very name of Parliament in Ireland.

After a few words from the honourable Mr. Trench, Mr. F. Trench, and the Attorney General, the question was put, and carried without a division.

Mr. MASON then moved a writ of election for the same borough, in the room of Silver Oliver, jun. Esq. who had accepted the Escheatorship of Munster. Ordered accordingly.

Colonel M'DONEL moved the issue of a writ for the county Roscommon, vacated by the Earl of Kingston being called to the upper House. Ordered.

Mr. J. C. BERESFORD arose again, and declared that he felt uneasy at the aspersion that rested against the Minister for his alledged conduct towards Colonel Cole, and willing to rescue the character of the noble Lord, and that of the Government with which he was connected, from imputations under which the noble Lord had been advised to remain silent, he would beg leave to move an humble address to his Majesty, entreating that his Majesty would be pleased to bestow on the Hon. R. Cole a pension of 10l. as a mark of the Royal favour, and a reward for his loyal services, &c.

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The SPEAKER having intimated to Mr. B. that a grant could only be moved for in the Committee of Supply, Mr. Beresford accordingly moved for the said Committee.

Mr. BARRINGTON said, that he had opposed the Place Bill for five years, and even when it was brought in under the sanction of Government, because he foresaw that it would be either nugatory or mischievous. It was a Bill professing to secure the independence of Parliament; but in fact, by the inadequacy of its provisions, placed a fatal power in the hands of the Government, to job away the interests of the Nation, and pervert the Law of the land, and the intention of the Legislature. At the time that Bill was passed, he acted strongly in support of the then Government, and had, in consistency with that support, for many years firmly opposed the enactment of that Bill; and when it was at length agreed to by Government, he continued his consistency, by refusing his assent, and foreseeing its consequences, opposed the measure, and by doing so, highly disobliged the Government with which he was connected. At an early period of the present session, he had moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Law which had given birth to the present debate, by the manner it had been acted upon by the noble Lord on the Treasury Bench, but the House had not thought proper to support him, not foreseeing the present abuse of the Bill.—He was glad now that the House would see the principle on which he had acted, and would acknowledge its force and justice. The present motion he would support, although he did not much approve of it, for he considered the better way would be at once boldly and manfully to come forward with an Address to his Majesty, stating the grievance of his Commons of Ireland, and the attempt of his Minister to destroy the independence of Parliament, by the abuse of the prerogative



gative of the Crown; to state to his Majesty that his Ministers in Ireland, affecting to take the fair opinion of the Nation, were endeavouring to pack a Parliament with a criminal intention, and had denied a Legislative right to the Nation, which they had monopolized for the Crown, and proved that they did not wish for the genuine opinion of an honest Parliament—that they wished to carry by fraud what they could not effect by conviction, and to convince the world that no measure could be too strong or too shameless which led to the subjugation of Ireland. He had rather this measure was brought forward by a constitutional Address from a loyal Parliament to a constitutional Monarch. The present motion looked something like pressing upon the Crown, without stating the causes of that pressure, and calling for an exercise of its prerogative, without leaving upon the Journals the reasons of the application. However, as it seemed the sense of the House to go through with the present motion, he trusted at least it would open the eyes of the independent Members of Parliament, to the vice and danger by which they were surrounded, and convince the Irish Nation that they must speak for themselves. He would vote for the motion, if persisted in; but should prefer an Address to the Throne of our Sovereign, stating our reasons as well as our request.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER arose, and moved the question of adjournment.

Mr. O'DONEL denied that the question which the noble Lord had been desired not to answer was the question of an individual of that House—but was the question of the House put in form of a motion, an acquiescence to which would rescue the Minister from the imputations attaching to his conduct. If it was persisted in to get rid of that motion by the indecorous mode of the question

question of adjournment, it would be sufficient confirmation that the Minister was perverting the prerogative of the Crown for the purpose of destroying the Constitution, and though he should do it singly and unsupported, he (Mr. O'D.) would at a future day move in that House for the impeachment of the Minister.

Mr. DOBBS said, that the doctrine of a right honourable and learned Gentleman (the Attorney General) was extraordinary indeed, that the House should spend its time in debate, on whether a new writ should issue, and that yet in no possible case the House could exercise its judgment, on the question whether such writ should be allowed. This he trusted was not a question necessary to argue, the constant usage of the House having already decided it. As to the merits of the question really before the House, he felt himself fettered by Parliamentary form, but he was at liberty to suppose a case.—He was at liberty to suppose it possible, that the Minister should grant the place of Escheator to the Members of a Borough, in order that two should be returned in their stead, who should vote for a Legislative Union, and that the purchase on the part of Government might be a Peerage to him who procured such returns. He was at liberty to suppose it possible, that the same Minister refused to an honourable Member, going to serve his Country in a military capacity, the opportunity of vacating his seat, because the consequence would be, that a Member would be returned that would vote, as the Member to be sent abroad would have done, if he had remained at home. Now if any such cases were to arise, he could not help avowing, that the question of Legislative Union had not fair play. On that question he had taken time to consider. It was not an opinion rashly taken up, and he was more and more convinced it would be disserviceable both to  
England



England and Ireland—and he here paid a compliment to the able speech of the Speaker. But he said if the fair sense of the People of Ireland was fairly decided to be against him, he for one would feel himself bound to submit; and he would then endeavour to make the best of it. He begged the noble Lord, who was the first Minister here, and for whom he had a personal regard, to consider well, before he allowed his Sovereign, or the People of Great Britain to be deceived, by a mere vote of that House obtained through influence, either as to places in possession, or places or honours in expectation. As to an honourable Member (Mr. Alexander) who had alledged the North of Ireland to be friendly to an Union, he apprehended he was greatly deceived. He (Mr. Dobbs) knew a good deal as to the North, and his conviction was, that if the People spoke their sentiments, they would be decidedly against a Legislative Union. That they were for the most part silent, had various causes. The laws now existing were unknown to times of tranquillity. The vast military force of the Country was able to suppress and punish opinion. He did not say the miserable circumstances of the times did not warrant the laws enacted, and the force that was employed: but he did not hesitate to say, that till such laws were repealed—that till such a force was rendered unnecessary, it was a mockery to talk of the true sense of the People of Ireland on this great question, that is, as far as human regulation can bind, to bind them for ever. He said, that even supposing the measure a salutary one, it ought to be allowed to work its own way; but to urge it, before it was received by general opinion, was, in his mind, so far from securing the connection between the two countries, of a total contrary tendency. Before he sat down, he called again on those, who like him were against this Legislative Union, seriously to consider

sider how they stood circumstanced, and not to let the Minister of England outbid them, in the purchase of the sentiments of their own People. He called upon them again to consider all that could be given with safety to the wishes of our own People of every description; and he added, that he would again, in the next session, move his five propositions for tranquillizing Ireland.

Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY.—Then Sir, I am to understand the noble Lord this House is to adjourn, be it so, let the House adjourn, let the noble Lord depart from this House at the head of his miserable majority, but let his character go along with him, let it stalk by his side, let it cling to him, let it be understood by this House and by the Country, that all the noble Lord's professions were hollow and hypocritical, the canting of a mountebank, Swift (in his enumerations of the qualities requisite for a great Statesman) says, that the first and most necessary is, that his words should be applied to every thing but the indication of his mind, however deficient the noble Lord may be in every other qualification of a great Statesman, he has certainly been most largely gifted with this. Let the House adjourn, but let it be understood by this House and by the country, that notwithstanding the solemn declaration of the noble Lord in this House, that the measure of a Union (though considered by him as necessary to the prosperity of this country,) should not be urged without their free *uninfluenced* consent, the noble Lord has had recourse to the meanest and basest efforts, in direct contradiction to those professions. Let the House adjourn, but let it be remembered that those powers which have been entrusted to the noble Lord for the protection of the privileges and independence of Parliament,  
have



have been perverted by him to the base and fraudulent purpose of packing that Parliament like a Grand Jury. Let the House adjourn, but let it be remembered that the noble Lord is at the head of a great army, let it be understood that the object of the noble Lord is to *pack* the Parliament for the purpose of carrying a vote in favour of his measure, and to enforce the vote of that *packed* parliament by that army. Let the House adjourn, but let the character of the noble Lord be fully understood, let it stick to him, let it be known that he is fair in profession, but foul in practice; let his character go to the people, let it be understood that after his saying that no further steps should be taken in this measure until this House and the country should have changed their minds, he has abused the power of the Crown to support him in that very conduct against which he stands so solemnly pledged. Let the House adjourn—I am indifferent as to the fate of this question, the character of the noble Lord and of the Government will go forth in their proper colours, let them persist in their system of fraud and corruption, it will avail them nothing when it is (as now it must be) perfectly understood, it will only confirm the Opposition of this House and of the country to a measure the iniquity of which is sufficiently characterised by the infamous means resorted to for its accomplishment.

Mr. M'CLELLAND said, that he would feel unworthy the seat which he held in that House, if he tamely submitted to hear such an abominable speech as that which had been just uttered.—He called the recollection of the House to the situation in which the country then stood, with a foreign foe threatening invasion, and perhaps

haps that moment on the coasts, [a laugh]—He would repeat, that the situation of the country was such as to render it unjustifiable in any man to urge the accusations against the Executive Power, which had been urged—and he contended that at such a moment no loyal man would tell the people that the Government was conspiring the destruction of the constitutional liberties—[a cry of hear! from the Opposition side of the House.] Let them hear—I beg they may, said Mr. M'Clelland—and I call the recollection of Gentlemen to the very different conduct of this House in the last session, when rebellion existed in the country, and the foe were at our gates—when every man expressed with one common voice, “though our opinions may differ in some respects, let us all agree in this moment of peril in supporting the Government.” Was the present discussion forced by Government? No! but it originated with the other side, and at a moment of all others the most dangerous to agitate the public mind—a moment in which no loyal man could listen with patience to any member portraying the Government of the country in such odious terms. Good God! exclaimed Mr. M'Clelland, is the spirit of loyalty fled from this House, that we hear such language used in it? I would recommend to the honourable and learned Member a little consistency—and that he would on the present occasion adopt that neutrality which he practised, when the country was involved in the perils of last summer—let him not come to this House for the purpose of making speeches calumniating Government, and calculated to excite a spirit of rebellion in the country. Sir, I have risen to express my most indignant disapprobation of the speech of the honourable Member—and in doing so, I trust I do but express the disapprobation of the majority of this House, and I do



trust we shall hear no more such speeches in this House.

Colonel M. BERESFORD expressed himself, in very warm terms of disapprobation of such language as Gentlemen at both sides of the House were in the habit of indulging in.

Mr. MARTIN.—We are asked if the conduct of Lord Cornwallis's Government can be justified—and if the nation will not judge in this instance of the confidence due to his administration? I will answer for the nation, and say, they cannot be guilty of such *folly* and ingratitude. But be it so—say that this instance *is* to determine, and I assert, and I will prove, that no shadow of blame can attach on Government. Is the office of Escheator an office of profit or not? It is an office of profit or it could not vacate the seat of him who accepts it—and if an office of profit, it is in the absolute unquestioned gift of the Crown—and we have as good a right to ask, why remove from office the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, as we have now to enquire why not grant by patent the employment in question to the honourable Colonel? This question cannot be debated until this House undertakes to administer the duties and prerogatives of the Crown. It was never wise or just in this House to trench on the acknowledged rights of our King, but it would be ruin to dispute now with that power which preserves to us in a moment of general distraction, life, liberty, and property. To refuse to grant this office of profit is the right of the Crown, and it is the duty of the guardians of that right to do it without explanation. I will tell the honourable gentleman that a liberal and candid nature would see nothing to which to object, or  
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to term unfair. Were it parliamentary I could cite many instances where persons have been enabled to vacate seats through the medium of this office, and to have persons unfriendly to the Union returned in their stead. This no man can deny—and I ask if it can be controverted? It is not—it cannot. I conclude, then, there must be, *if* the present case exist, some particular motive more than a general idea that the person is not friendly to the measure. Suppose the gentleman to be returned in the stead of him who vacates, to have so far, previous to all discussion, pledged himself against a measure that it was impossible for him at the time to understand, and thereby to deprive himself of being a free agent on the greatest subject that was ever brought under consideration, will any man say the Ministers of the Crown have not a discretionary power? and if they have, would not such a case be the fittest for them to exert that discretion by refusing to grant the office in question? Were it compatible with the noble Lord's duty, he would, perhaps, declare that case to exist now. Let the nation decide on this measure, and the Administration, and I fear not the result for that nobleman whose virtues and talents I revere. But the country will not select *one* trivial instance to praise where they can choose from many. Is it not by his wisdom, more than by his arms, that the rebellion has been put down? Has not the expectation of his clemency done as much to preserve Ireland, as the terror of his power? I say, Mr. Speaker, had he listened to intemperate, bigoted councils, and counsellors, that when the French landed at Killala, the rebellion would rage in every county as much as it did in Wexford at the battle of New-Ross, by his mercy he conquered the rebels, for he separated from them those who were forced by terror, or even those who were deluded.



But his Excellency boasts a better conquest, and it is one over himself, over his own nature, when his duty forbid him to spare those who by irreclaimable wickedness became the proper objects of punishment, and where real objects of punishment have been found, I defy the calumniators of his administration not to allow that his Excellency considered with a mild firmness what was due to *justice* as well as to humanity.

I know, Mr. Speaker, there are three or four individuals who blame what almost as many millions approve. The Marquis Cornwallis did not submit to be the pliant, docile, pupil of those who used to *command* when it was their duty to *obey*, but without such assistance, and in defiance even of their machinations, he has saved Ireland. That he has saved Ireland, witness the confidence of a *disciplined* army—witness the confidence which the country has in them, and which both have in the name of *Cornwallis*.—That he has saved Ireland, witness again the repose of every part of the island, with an enemy hovering on our coast, and known to be destined for that purpose. Why do we not hear of a rebel army assembling? For this reason—that no country was ever in a better state of preparation—so much so, that the wish of every loyal man now is to see the enemy land, that we may see him perish, or exist only in a state of captivity. Did his Excellency accomplish this by consulting any of the great Parliamentary undertakers—no, Sir, he was enabled only to accomplish it by separating from them, from that faction who expelled one Commander in Chief, and obliged the then Lord Lieutenant to apply for his recall. Those are the acts, Mr. Speaker, on which the public will decide the merits of his Excellency's Administration,

tion, and not on hearing to whom the office of Escheator has been granted or refused.

My honourable friend seems to suppose that I would undertake to prove individual corruption on the other side of the House. This I did not assert, but I declared, that there was an interest attributable to them as a *body*, and this I re-assert—whether in obedience to this interest they rendered their votes, I don't pretend to determine—that such an interest existed I will prove; first, as to the county Members: it was reported that one only was to sit in the Union Parliament for each county—now on this calculation, half the county Members must oppose the measure, if to sit in Parliament be an object worth their attention—but if the half remaining, who might have the interest, many of them might be induced, contrary to their opinion, to vote against the Union, from this consideration, that if they voted for the Union, and by that vote excluded their colleague—that such colleague, though inferior himself in interest, might join some other party in the county or counties, so as to exclude those who voted for the Legislative Union. Now this kind of reasoning applies to the whole House of Commons—supposing the number returned to be 100, and that 200 are excluded, so that 200, out of 300, are interested to vote against the Union. Whether those Gentlemen who voted against the measure, voted from the pressure of this interest, is not decorous to assert. I, however, cannot find it easy to discover a better or more cogent reason for the very violent opposition that has been given to a measure calculated to promote the general weal and interest of the Irish nation.

Mr.



Mr. J. C. BERESFORD said, that he did not expect his motion would have been got rid of by the unceremonious question of adjournment, moved, he would say, almost uncivilly, for not a single word was offered in explanation. He said it was not a light matter that a bill passed for the purpose of securing the independence of Parliament, should be acted upon so as to produce a contrary effect—and if acts of Parliament were to be so perverted with impunity, its liberties were gone, and it was of little moment whether there was an Union or not. If, however, the question of adjournment was carried, it should not prevent him from persevering in his motion, and he would again bring it forward on the 1st of June, and again and again, in order to preserve the liberties of Parliament, and of the Country. It was the fashion in that House to talk of French invasion, and oppose that bugbear to the arguments of reason, and of truth;—but if the French were off the coasts, he thanked God, there was spirit enough in the country to resist them—[hear! hear! ]—and if rebellion were again to raise its head, he thanked God, there was spirit enough in the country to suppress it [hear! hear! ]—But if rebellion were again to revive, it would be by the Members of that House remaining insensible to such an abuse as then occupied the attention of the House. Then, indeed, rebellion would approach in its most formidable shape—for the consciousness of having assisted to promote it, would unnerve the arm of any man in that House who should so grossly neglect his duty as to pass over the conduct of the noble Lord in silence. As to the threats of invasion, he had not patience to hear the freedom of debate attempted to be put down by such contemptible pretexts. An honourable Member had entered into a calculation of the interests swaying the Members who voted against an Union. It was true, they did feel an interest

interest influencing their conduct, but it was that which identified them with their constituents—that interest which was excited by every thing dear and honourable to public and private character—that interest which attached the Constituent and the Representative to each other by a sympathy of honest feeling—a feeling which he trusted would ever warm the breasts of honest Irishmen. [Mr. B. concluded amid a cry of hear! hear!]

Rt. Hon. LODGE MORRES strongly censured the irrelevant discussion which had been introduced, and particularly the assertion which he said had been made, that Lord Cornwallis was at the head of 160,000 armed men for the purpose of enslaving the Parliament and people of Ireland; [a cry of No! No! from the Opposition Benches] he continued that to his conception the assertion had been made, but, however, he would be happy to find himself mistaken, and if the honourable and learned Member [Mr. G. P.] had not made use of the expressions, he had then an opportunity of disavowing them. Mr. Morres then sat down, and the other side of the House remaining silent, he again arose, and said, that as no disavowal had been made of the words he had mentioned, he was, of course, only confirmed in the opinion that they had been spoken—[Another cry of No! from the other side of the House.] Mr. Morres spoke further, but in so low a tone of voice that we were not able to collect what he said.

Mr. PLUNKETT.—Sir, I shall not long trespass on your attention, as much of what had occurred to me, has been already urged with manliness and eloquence by the honourable member who sits near me. But I must beg leave to observe on what has fallen from my honourable friend on the other side [Mr. Martin] with respect



respect to the pressure of interested motives on the minds of those who have rejected the proposal of Union—Sir, what I originally stated was, that no man who opposed that measure was acted on by motives of individual interest; but so far as the interests of the individual are wound up in and identified with those of the country, I must admit with the honourable Member that every Member of the State is deeply pledged in interest against a Legislative Union,—You, Sir, had already proved that the prosperity of the People of Ireland must be blighted by the measure, and the honourable Member has now completed the demonstration, by shewing that it would be equally ruinous to the Parliament. The honourable Gentleman has shewn that every Member of this House is as such interested against the measure, with him I call on every Member of this House to join in its reprobation.—He has shewn that every man of rank or consequence in the country must shrink into insignificance if the measure should be adopted; with him I call on every man of rank or consequence to join in its reprobation.—He has shewn that there is no man in Ireland possessed of £300 per annum, who must not find the baneful effects of the measure; with him I call on every man of that description to join in its reprobation, and now Sir, I trust that after you have by arguments unanswered and unanswerable, convinced every thinking mind of what the interests of the nation demand, and after the honourable member has satisfactorily proved what the interests of the Parliament, and of the rank and of the property of the country demand, that no voice will be heard in favour of this execrable scheme, but that, covered with the detestation of Parliament and of People, it will be dismissed for ever. Sir, an honourable Gentleman who spoke from a back bench (Mr. M'Clelland) announced  
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in form to the House, that he was carried away by a storm of indignation at what had fallen from my honourable Friend beside me (Mr. G. Ponsonby,) Sir, I really was much alarmed when the honourable and learned Gentleman avowed the extent of his ire, he had arrayed himself in such terrors that I really apprehended he would have been hurried beyond all bounds of moderation, and that the tempest of his passion might have whirled him into some fatal indiscretion; I own, Sir, I was much relieved by finding that the honourable and learned Gentleman's indignation had consumed itself in his exordium, and that in the course of his observations he had recovered such a degree of prudence and tameness, not to call it flatness, that the only apprehension to be entertained, was lest the minister should feel no great degree of gratitude for his exertions. The learned and honourable Gentleman was so indignant "that he actually disapproved of what had fallen from the honourable Member on this side;" "he was so transported by wrath that he really did not approve of such language as he had heard." What said the learned Gentleman? when the French fleet is off our coasts, when a rebellion is raging in our country, are we to be told that the Government of the country is acting a dishonest part? are we to be told that they hold out fair pretences, and are guilty of foul practices? are we to be told that they are proceeding to carry the question of Union by force or fraud? Is it not to be lamented, Sir, that the anger which is so much alive at the bare mention of those enormities, should be so totally unmoved at the perpetration of them. I too can feel indignation, I can say, what, when the fleets of the enemy are invading your coasts, and a rebellion raging in your country, shall the loyal men of Ireland be insulted by hollow pretences and wicked deeds? shall they



be told that their liberties are to be taken from them by force or fraud? shall they see that the benches of Parliament are to be shut against their friends, and to be filled by an unconstitutional exercise of the prerogative to procure the semblance of a majority? shall they be outraged by a system of conduct which ceases to be scandalous hypocrisy only in so much as it becomes barefaced effrontery. I too can be indignant, but I own my indignation flames not against the honest man who reprobates their crimes, but against the wicked Minister who commits them. What is the reason, says the learned Member, that we have not now the same zeal and unanimity which displayed itself last year, when invasion was threatened and rebellion reared its crest? Let him ask the noble Lord—let him ask why has this frantic and wicked scheme been hatched? I will tell the learned Member why there is not the same zeal—it is because the warm blood of loyalty has been frozen by this project of an Union—it is because the honest arms that were raised in defence of the state have been paralysed by this project of an Union—it is because the Government of the country have had recourse to measures and to means which can leave room for no other sentiment than contempt and detestation in every honest breast. Sir, I trust that in spite of this, there is still a paramount loyalty and patriotism in the country, which will rise superior to the efforts of the Minister, and which will boldly exert itself against the Invader or the Rebel; but certainly the noble Lord cannot take any blame to himself, if that sentiment does remain unsubdued—no effort on his part has been spared for its extinction. Sir, I confess I did at one time rejoice in the appointment of the noble Lord to the Administration of this Country. When I perceived that wicked and destructive measures were in agitation, I re-  
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joiced that an impotent and incapable instrument was selected for their execution; but I have ceased to entertain that feeling, because though I am as well convinced as of my existence, that he never can accomplish his measure, I see by woful experience that he may do infinite mischief in attempting it. Sir, there are no talents too mean—there are no powers too low, for the accomplishment of mischief—It is the condition of our nature—it is part of the mysterious and inscrutable dispensation of Providence, that talent, and virtue, and wisdom, are necessary for the atchievement of great good; but there is no capacity so vile or so wretched, as not to be adequate to the perpetration of evil—I do therefore once more caution the noble Lord how he precipitates this country into a situation from which power and wisdom, and virtue may in vain endeavour to rescue it. I caution him not to commit the two countries, by misrepresenting to the Government of England the real situation of the People of Ireland. We all remember with what pomp and swagger this fatal measure was first introduced—the People were for it—an overgrown majority in Parliament were for it. We all know that these were illusions and deceptions. The same trade of absurd boasting is now carrying on—We hear it said that the majority in Parliament has changed its mind. I should have a curiosity to hear the voice of any one man of that majority who has changed his mind. The fact is not so. It is said the People have changed their minds. Where do you find that change? Will you take the sense of that People? The fact is not so, and you know it. You dare not make the experiment. Sir, there are dishonest practices, and if persevered in, must end in fatal mischief—I do therefore use this last opportunity which the present session may afford, to caution the noble Lord against committing the two countries by such delusions—the consequence must rest upon



his

head, and poor indeed will be the atonement which such a head can make for the mischiefs which such a head can occasion!

Sir B. ROCHE arose, he said, because he could not sit silent and hear such language used in that House—language which he had been in the habit of hearing since the year 1783, and to which all the evils of this unhappy country were owing—language only calculated to produce anarchy and confusion throughout the land. On the subject of an Union, since it had been introduced into the debate, he would beg leave to say one word—he considered it to be the only radical and lasting remedy for the evils under which the country labours, and upon his honour, he averred, that for upward of twenty years that he had had the honour of a seat in that House, he had been considering that things could not go on as they were, and whatever clamour might be raised by interested men, against a Legislative Union, he would venture to prophesy, that the country would arrive at that state, that when the Day of affliction and Judgment would come, the People of Ireland would call out and implore for an Union.

Mr. BARRINGTON.—I am happy, Sir, to coincide with the honourable Baronet—I agree entirely with him that the *Day of Judgment* is a time peculiarly adapted to the discussion of a Union.

Sir Boyle Roche interrupted, and was stopped by the Speaker.

Mr. BARRINGTON.—The honourable Bart. was perfectly right, that on *that day* the eyes of the Nation would be open to the merits of a Union.

Sir BOYLE.—Mr. Speaker, I *will clear myself* —!

Mr. BARRINGTON.—Sir, on the day which the honourable Baronet has mentioned for the discussion of a Union, we shall certainly have had great experience as to our political connection—and if the Honourable Baronet will then take the trouble of offering his sentiments

ments on the subject, I dare say he will find us all of one way of thinking as to the expediency of then and there discussing the question, when the loss of our corporeal appurtenances may so strongly sharpen our intellects as to shew us the many advantages to be derived from that measure, but which to our present over-loaded mortal capacity, are altogether invisible. Therefore I do certainly approve of the Day of Judgment, as proposed by the noble Bart. for its discussion—and none of us, I believe, will then feel any strong inclination or capacity to oppose our Government. An honourable Gentleman has told the House, and I am sure he could have no doubt of gaining credit to his assertion, that he can find his way to the Castle—I feel fully satisfied that he does find his way to the Castle, and sees clearly when he gets there—aye, and distinguishes interest from no-interest as well as any gentleman at his side of the House. The honourable Gentleman, Sir, talks of sacrificing Parliamentary situation—it would be well for his constituents he never had an opportunity of making a sacrifice which marks them as the victims. He talks of resigning the hopes which that situation inspires—he best knows whether he has a Parliamentary hope remaining unaccomplished. The House, Sir, as I do, must admire the honourable Gentleman's disinterestedness and patriotism, and, indeed, believe it almost incredible! The sacrifices he talks of making, are certainly suitable to the honourable Gentleman's public spirit and love of his Country, and in following so good an example, I trust I will be excused for telling the House the sacrifices I have made—I, Sir, will not talk of Parliamentary power, and Parliamentary hopes; perhaps my constituents might not be altogether of opinion that these are the fit objects of Representative duty and service. Sir, I have sacrificed my professional promotion—I have sacrificed the great object of my life and labours, to preserve my conscience and my character—I have relinquished the  
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most dear and respected connexions and friendships, or rather they have relinquished me, because I would not transfer my regard for their private worth to their public conduct. I, Sir, have separated myself from a Government I have supported for years, because I could no longer act with them, without acting against my Country; and when the measures of that Government became hostile to the independence of my native land, I embraced that line of conduct which nature, reason, duty, and virtue pointed out—I left the Administration, and clung to my Country.—These, Sir, were the sacrifices which I made, and to those I am ready, if necessary, to add my life; and these, Sir, were the sacrifices made by every Gentleman on this side of the House, with whose motives I have the honour of being acquainted. The honourable Gentleman has acknowledged his sacrifices to be different, and the House must feel they are. The honourable Gentleman will please to do me credit for my sacrifices—and with respect to those which he has made, I do most devoutly assure him that not a single particle of their merit is lost on me. But I own that there are certainly sacrifices of great importance made by the honourable Gentleman's friends, the merit of which I neither assume or aspire to—I, Sir, do not assume to have sacrificed my principle, my honesty, or my character—nor do I aspire to the reward of so glorious and so disinterested a sacrifice. My opposition to Administration, did not receive its principle of existence on the very moment the measure of an Union was brought forward in this House—I saw it in its approaches—I saw it in the first measures of Lord Cornwallis's Government—I saw it in a system which divided the loyalty of the Country, and made the interests of the rebel paramount—for had the loyalty of the Country remained undivided, the Constitution of the Country dared not to have been assailed. This, Sir, I saw, and this I disapproved; but let the Administration

nistration again ally itself to the Constitution, and I will again ally myself to the Administration.

Sir, this measure, it is said, will strengthen and consolidate the Empire, and *I* would willingly concur in any measure which could effect so desirable an object, without being injurious to this Country—I would serve and strengthen Great Britain as a *friend*, but never as a *dependant*—I would, as the honourable Baronet most ingeniously remarked, “*have the two sisters embrace each other like one brother* ;” but it should be the embrace of affection, and not the grasp of power—the natural love and fostering attachment of legitimate primogeniture, and not the interested professions of unnatural avarice and ambition. Does not every day convince us that it is not intended to deal fairly by Ireland? Men displaced for their honesty, and others elevated for their vices—even the capacity of profession prostituted to the objects of seduction. Let Gentlemen reflect upon themselves, and they will probably discover that in this contest the real issue is between interest and integrity — —. I could not conceive, Sir, that the most abandoned sale of principles could have exhibited so feeble, yet so profligate a display of argument as that used from the second bench—that the dread of foreign invasion was to restrain the freedom of Parliamentary debate, and induce this House to an easy and criminal acquiescence in every measure of Administration.

This bugbear of invasion is a hackneyed tool in the hands of a bungling artist. If invasion were to happen, the honourable Gentleman would not be more ready to draw his sword in defence of his King, than the person whom he vilifies. He calls up all his fears and all his surmises, to magnify the dread of an invasion



sion of our shore ; yet with all the unprincipled boldness of a political hero, he rushes on every occasion to invade and overthrow the Constitution.

When in support of Government, I have myself spoken of the hazardous tendency of a *needleless* political opposition, when rebellion was at hand, and invasion was expected ; but the subjects then before Parliament, were frivolous in comparison to the present measure—Whether Dublin should be guarded by a watch or a police, gave us many sleepless nights. Our time was occupied, and our passions inflamed, on the most unimportant subjects. I supported the Government on its own principles, and with all my power I resisted every innovation on the Constitution. I am consistent—I resist innovation still in the most important point—I resist the most desperate, the most dangerous, the most overwhelming innovation that ever was attempted to be forced upon a nation—I resist a Legislative Union—I resist every measure which aids it directly, equivocally, or indirectly ; and it is those who condemn my firmness, that are venal and inconsistent.

I think, Sir, that the right hon. Gentleman who has proposed the question of adjournment, has mistaken his duty to the noble Lord—imputations of the most criminal nature have been urged against him by many members of this House—imputations which if true, would render him an unfit Minister for the Crown, and a just sacrifice to the nation ; but I must call them merely imputations, unless proved or admitted. I, Sir, cannot acquiesce in a condemnation of the noble Lord, unless his friends avow it. It is not proved—it is not admitted ; but then it is not *denied*. The motion goes in fact to a  
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personal charge against the noble Lord—and the question of adjournment goes to smother the enquiry, without contradicting the imputation. If a man is arraigned for weighty crimes, and put upon his defence, and instead of pleading *not* guilty, tries to get off on a quibble of his counsel, though he may be discharged from custody, he will never be discharged from guilt—the crime is acknowledged by the evasion, and he is held as infamous as a convict. I wish for the sake of Government and of the noble Lord, that his friend would withdraw the question of adjournment—it will stamp both. Why should the noble Lord submit to the imputation of guilt, sooner than declare his innocence? And though I, Sir, and others may leave this House, supposing the noble Lord incapable of the offences to his King and Country with which he stands charged, yet it will be impossible to persuade the nation that he would have stifled a charge, if he could effectually oppose it, and they will be led to believe that the vilest means have been adopted, to pack and to corrupt their Parliament.

The nice and accurate distinctions of a Minister's inviolability of communication, coined by his friends for his excuse, will be thrown away on the clumsy understandings of the Irish nation, who will consider things as they are, and not as they might be. I therefore repeat to the noble Lord, and in respect to his Majesty's Government, I hope the question of adjournment will not be persisted in as a measure to screen a crime which, if fact, no man in Great Britain could approve, and no man in Ireland could justify.

Sir, I fear I have trespassed on the patience of the House [a great cry of hear! hear!], and shall say no

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[more than that if the treatment extended to my honourable Friend (Colonel Cole) has been for the purpose of trying the pulse of this House, I fancy the noble Lord has gained nothing by the experiment—and should the noble Lord or his successor again venture to bring forward in the abstract the subject of a Legislative Union, the virtue of the majority of the Irish Parliament, and the spirit of the Irish Nation, will again convince the world that it is easier to calumniate than to overthrow the Liberties and Independence of a country. We are loyal, but we are free; and it is not the language of Administration that shall enslave us—I protest against the adjournment on the part both of my King and my Country.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he did not arise to detain the House, which had been but too long occupied by a debate wholly irrelevant to the question before it. In moving the question of adjournment he conceived he had only acted conformable to the duty attaching to his official situation, for if on every spur of the moment gentlemen were to rise in that House, and move grants and pensions as led by their particular friendships, and if the House were to accede, there would be no end to such motions, unless by the public inability to comply with the object of them. He would be unworthy the important situation which he filled, if he did not oppose such motions, and if he did not preface the motion which he had made by a train of explanation, it was because he conceived the propriety of it too evident to every man in that House, to render such explanation necessary. The honourable Colonel who was the object of the motion made by his honourable Friend (Mr. Beresford) might be fully entitled

entitled to the favour of his Sovereign and that House ; no man entertained an higher sense of his merits, but still the decency and deliberation of Parliamentary usage should not be deserted on his account, and due notice should be given of such a measure as that proposed. With respect to the Place-bill, if gentlemen at the other side of the House felt it a public grievance, the proper mode was, in the due course of Parliamentary procedure, to bring in a bill, either to amend or to repeal it, but as it happened to be a law, it was the duty of his Majesty's Ministers to act upon it according to the best judgment they could form of its spirit, and application to the public interests.

Mr. DAWSON denied that the part he had taken in the debate of that night, arose from any motives of personal friendship, but from a sense of public justice—for great as was his regard for the honourable Colonel, he had still more for the independence of Parliament, and the interests of his country, against which he felt the conduct of the Minister directed, by the use which, in the present instance, he had made of the Place-bill. He did not want that bill repealed—let it stand ; but let its operation be dealt fairly and impartially to every side of the House. Why, he asked, did the noble Lord keep the boroughs full, the Members of which he knew would vote for an Union, and refuse the Escheatorship of Munster to those who he knew would oppose that measure ? Why was the noble Lord's predecessor made a gentleman at large, and another member brought in for Armagh ? Was it because he thought the influence of the Crown too great in that House, or because his predecessor stood in need of a salary of 150l. a year ? Why was the Escheatorship of



Munster given to the Member for Armagh, and refused to the Member for Enniskillen? I will tell you why, said Mr. D.—Because the electors of Enniskillen would not put in a creature of the Minister's—and because that Minister knew that the honourable Colonel, the present Member, had too much loyalty, courage, and honour to resign his commission, when appointed to a service of danger by his Sovereign, and therefore, in denying him the power of vacating his seat, that there would be a vote less against the measure of an Union.

Lord CASTLEREAGH rose, and said he had sat silent during the whole of this debate in resistance to the repeated demands of explanation from Gentlemen on the other side of the House, determined that no assertions hazarded in flippancy of debate—no impulse of his own indignation, excited by the false and unwarrantable charges imputed to that Government with which he had the honour to be connected, should force him to any disclosure of motives, which by the confidential duties of his situation he was bound to withhold.—Feeling himself, therefore, not at all obliged to answer those loose interrogatories which the honourable Member, or those with whom he acted, might choose to direct to him upon every desultory discussion which might take place, he had only to assure the honourable Member, that on this, or any other question, fairly brought forward for discussion, he should be ready at any time to meet him or any other member, and fairly and fully to vindicate the motives of that Government with which he had the honour to be connected in any measure they deemed necessary to bring forward. An honourable Member [Mr. G. Ponsonby] had thought fit to impute to the Government of the country the most  
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unworthy and corrupt motives, for bringing forward the measure which they conceived to be the only one effectually calculated to rescue this country from the mischievous consequences of the language used in that House by the honourable Member—language but too fatally calculated to alienate from the Government the affections of the people, and to excite anarchy and confusion; but notwithstanding the language that Gentleman constantly assumed the liberty of directing to him, he should never obey his political nod, or consider himself bound to answer all interrogatories he might think proper to address to him.—The hon. Gentleman was constantly in the habit of attributing to himself a peculiar share of political virtue:—But how were his claims founded? had he not been for a series of years the most devoted tool of what he was pleased to call ministerial corruption, by being at least the most sedulous instrument of the Administration under which he once held a place; but quarrelling with Administration upon a particular point, he became one of the most violent opponents of the Crown; and hence arose his plans of reform, and all those other measures which had been at once the pillars of his popularity, the ground-works of his projected aggrandisement, and the themes of those inflammatory declamations by which he had assisted to kindle the popular mind of this country into a flame; and when he had at length led the country into a situation out of which he could not extricate her, left the country and the Government to struggle it out, and seceded from Parliament!

Having thus traced the honourable Gentleman from his state of independence, through his state of popularity to his state of neutrality, where was he then found? Why in an obscure corner of the Four Courts,  
 apparent



apparent confidence whispering with the most suspicious characters of the day—and after having thrown off his red coat, which he wore but for a few days during the heat of rebellion, he comes into this House to traduce the Government, for attempting to bring forward the only measure which appeared to them calculated to stem the progress of that rebellion, to the excitement of which his own language originally contributed in so eminent a degree.—His Lordship concluded by voting for the question of adjournment.

Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY was rising to reply—but was prevented by a general cry of spoke! spoke!

Right Hon. W. B. PONSONBY.—A right hon, Gentleman on the other side of the House (Mr. Corry) has said, that if the Place Bill, as it now stands, is considered as a grievance, the proper way would be to bring in a Bill to amend it. I have no objection to doing so, provided the Gentlemen on that side of the House will pledge themselves that the House shall be permitted to sit long enough to allow the Bill to go through the necessary forms; but that they will not do it, would not answer their purposes.—The noble Lord who spoke last, has thought proper to arraign the conduct of a Gentleman who (having spoke early in the debate) is, by the rules of the House, precluded from making any reply. As the political conduct of that Gentleman is necessarily connected with my own, I must beg leave to say a few words on that subject. The noble Lord has talked much of inconsistency. When the noble Lord makes that charge against the conduct of others, he would do well to recollect his own; I must say, he is the last person from whom I should have expected to hear such a charge.

charge. He has been pleased to mention Parliamentary Reform. *I* was the mover of Parliamentary Reform, and I glory in it. *I* have not been in the habit of making declarations, and relinquishing them. Every engagement *I* had ever made to the country, I have fulfilled to the utmost of my power. The Reform was not brought forward by me, and those with whom I acted, as a speculative or theoretic measure. The abuses and corruption of Government, called for it, and it appeared to us to be the only remaining possible remedy. Can the noble Lord (like his master, the Minister of England, whom he endeavours to copy) forget that he was himself the strenuous supporter of Reform? If he has, let him ask the county of Down—the county of Down knows it. The noble Lord has talked of disappointed ambition. I will tell the noble Lord that I have been more than once in my life in a situation to spurn at every honour and emolument that the Government of the Country could offer, because I felt that the conduct which I should be required to adopt, in consequence of accepting them, would be degrading and disgraceful. What has the noble Lord refused, that has been offered to him? What sacrifices has he made to those principles which he *pretends* to possess. But I will say no more—I should scorn to enter into a competition of character with the noble Lord—an honest and impartial country will, I trust, judge between us.

The question was then put—

For the adjournment,  
Against it,

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The House accordingly adjourned to the 1st of June.

THE END.





